The techniques of teaching vocabulary in the classroom

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Annotation: In the article is presented vast majority of the new words, a great percentage of the words used to express abstract ideas, are complex words that are made up of simple word parts (prefixes, roots, and suffixes) that have their own definitions and, when familiar to the student of English, can be understood in context without an exact definition.

Introduction

Perhaps the most important factor in a successful vocabulary-building program is motivation. It will be very difficult for you to study words month after month without a strong feeling that it is worth doing, that a larger vocabulary will help you in school and on the job, and that it can well lead to a more exciting and fulfilling life.

For the first according to the topic of our research paper we identify **four basic steps** to a better vocabulary:

1. Be Aware of Words
2. Read
3. Use a Dictionary
4. Study and Review Regularly

While there are not any magic shortcuts to learning words, the larger your vocabulary becomes, the easier it will be to connect a new word with words you already know, and thus remember its meaning.

English vocabulary is enormous and grows steadily with technological and cultural assimilations. The vast majority of the new words introduced, and a great percentage of the words used to express abstract ideas, are complex words that are made up of simple word parts (prefixes, roots, and suffixes) that have their own definitions and, when familiar to the student of English, can be understood in context without an exact definition.

The method - After reading a paragraph, the teacher should excerpt a few complex words, for example 'invisible' and 'decision.' The teacher then tells the students that these words are made up from word parts and that a great many words in English are as well, and that studying these parts increases vocabulary immensely. The teacher breaks the words down into their parts, writing on the board what each part means. Then, introduce other words that have the same roots in them, for television, video, and even view, for 'cis, cid' scissors, homicide, and suicide. Then define the

prefixes and suffixes of those words. This will lead to a list of 8 or 10 words. This kind of brainstorming should be kept to a minimum in the first weeks and then indulged in more freely as the students gain in confidence. The students will be confused at first. Just remind them that this is a process that gets easier with repetition. The next week, quiz the students on how to break down last week's words into prefixes, roots and suffixes, and what each word part means. We usually chose 5 words and the quiz is worth 10 points, one point for identifying the correct prefix, root, and suffix, and one point for correct definitions of each word part. (If the word is broken down incorrectly, for example 'inv- in, -isi- to see, -ble- able to,' one point is taken off. If one part is defined incorrectly, '-vis- to scare', one point is taken off.) After the quiz, or during the reading time in class, I introduce half a dozen new words and word parts for the following week. In a matter of weeks, students will not only be comfortable identifying complex words in their own reading and writing, but also of breaking those words (and others with which they are not familiar) down and attempting to understand their meaning by the meanings of their parts. They will know the most popular prefixes and suffixes (ad-, de-, ex-, in-, and –tion, -ate, -al) because they will have seen them and heard them repeated many times over. I reward students who utilize complex words in their writing or speaking with extra credit points. This system is daunting at first, but over time and with repetition, students naturally become more confident, and learn how to teach themselves the language. Measuring Word Recognition Using a Picture

The task specifications below show an alternative test method using matching that we have developed to measure the ability of grade school students to recognize written single words. This task type was first developed for children in the Korean/English Two-Way Bilingual Immersion Program for learning two languages (Korean and English), and has been successfully implemented for these students.

- Reading ability being tested: The ability to recognize single written words that are concrete nouns and to comprehend their meaning.
- This task uses pictures that illustrate settings common to the students' daily lives and school experiences. The pictures depict a number of concrete nouns.
- The target language is English, but may also be another language.

"Look at the picture (Pause). Look at the words around the picture (Pause.)

Find the biggest word. What is that word? (Students will say, "Table.") A line has been drawn from that word to the TABLE to match them. In the same way, please find all the words that you know and draw a line to match them with the right object in the picture. Make sure that the ends of your lines touch the words and the things in the picture. You will have five minutes to complete the exercise."

The vocabulary, therefore, must be carefully selected in accordance with the principles of selecting linguistic material, the conditions of teaching and learning a foreign language in school. Scientific principles of selecting vocabulary have been worked out. **The words selected should be :**

- frequently used in the language (the frequency of the word may be determined mathematically by means of statistic data);

- easily combined (nice room, nice girl, nice weather);

- unlimited from the point of view of style (oral, written);

- included in the topics the syllabus sets;

- valuable from the point of view of word-building (use, used, useful, useless, usefully, user, usage).

The first principle, word frequency, is an example of a purely linguistic approach to word selection. It is claimed to be the soundest criterion because it is completely objective. It is derived by counting the number of occurrences of words appearing in representative printed material comprising novels, essay, pays, poems, newspapers, textbooks, and magazines.

Modern tendency is to apply this principle depending on the language activities to be developed. For developing reading **skills** pupils need "reading vocabulary" (M. West), thus various printed texts are analyzed from the point of view of word frequency. For developing speaking skills pupils need "speaking vocabulary". In this case the material for analysis is the spoken language recorded. The occurrences of words are counted in it and the more frequently used in speaking are selected.

The other principles are of didactic value, they serve teaching aims.

The words selected may be grouped under the following the classes (M. West):

1. Words that we talk with or form (structural) words which make up the form (structure) of the language.

2. Words that we talk about or content words.

In teaching vocabulary for practical needs both structural words and content words are of great importance. That is why they are included in the vocabulary minimum.

H.Douglas Broun in his book "Principles of language learning and teaching" offers lots of psychological and scientific information regarding the principles of eaching. We just do an attempt to choose the appropriate one for vocabulary.

The **first principle** in teaching vocabulary is the **availability of comprehension and production. "In** child language, most observational and research evidence points to the general superiority of comprehension over production: children seem to understand "more" than they actually produce. For instance, a child may understand a sentence with an embedded relative in it (e.g., "The ball that's in the sandbox is red") but not be able to produce one. W.R. Miller gave us a good example of this phenomenon in phonological development: "Recently a three-year-old child told me her name was Litha. I answered Litha?' *No, Litha.' 'Oh, Lisa.' 'Yes, Litha.'" The child clearly perceived the contrast between English s and *th,* even though she could not produce the contrast herself." In teaching it is very important to develop the comprehension competence and production competence as well. However it is necessary to make a distinction between production competence and comprehension competence. A theory of language must include some accounting of the separation of the two type of competence. In fact, linguistic competence no doubt has several mode or levels, at least as many as four, since speaking, listening, reading, an writing are all separate modes of performance.

The **second principle** for teaching vocabulary according to H. Douglas Brown is **systematicity and variability.** One of the assumptions of a good deal of current research on child language is the **systematicity** of the process of acquisition. From pivot grammar to three- and four-word utterances, and to full sentences of almost indeterminate length, children exhibit a remarkable ability to infer the phonological, structural, lexical, and semantic system of language. The teacher

realizing this phenomenon of children's acquisition should introduce new vocabulary systematically. But in the midst of all this systematicity, there is an equally remarkable amount of **variability** in the process of learning. Just as native speakers of a language vacillate between expressions like "It has to be you" and "It must be you," learners also exhibit variation, sometimes within the parameters of acceptable norms, sometimes not. Some variability in learner language can be explained by what Gatbonton (1983) described as the "gradual diffusion" of incorrect forms of language in emergent and systematic stages of development. First, incorrect forms coexist with correct; then, the incorrect are expunged. Context has also been identified as a source of variation. In classrooms, the type of task can affect variation (Tarone & Parrish 1988).

The third principle is the creating of **motivation.** Motivation is probably the most frequently used catch-all term for explaining the success or failure of virtually any complex task. It is easy to assume that success in any task is due simply to the fact that someone is "motivated." It is easy in second language learning to claim that a learner will be successful with the proper motivation. Such claims are of course not erroneous, for countless studies and experiments in human learning have shown that motivation is a key to learning and learning vocabulary as well.

The fourth principle is error **treatment** . One of the major issues involved in teaching vocabulary is the manner in which teachers deal with student errors. The most useful implication of Vigil and Oiler's model for a theory of error treatment is that cognitive feedback must be optimal in order to be effective. Too much negative cognitive feedback—a barrage of interruptions, corrections, and overt attention to malformations—often leads learners to shut off their attempts at communication. They perceive that so much is wrong with their production that there is little hope to get anything right. On the other hand, too much positive cognitive feedback—willingness of the teacher-hearer to let errors go uncorrected, to indicate understanding when understanding may not have occurred—serves to reinforce the errors of the speaker-learner. The result is the persistence, and perhaps the eventual fossilization, of such errors. The task of the teacher is to discern the optimal tension between positive and negative cognitive feedback: providing enough green lights to encourage continued communication, but not so many that crucial errors go unnoticed, and providing enough red lights to call attention to those crucial errors, but not so many that the learner is discouraged from attempting to speak at all.

The fifth principle involves taking into account **personal factors** of learners which the teacher usually deals with. Personal factors include: •the affective domain - emotional side of human behavior; •self-esteem;

•inhibition - attempts to protect the ego;

•risk-taking;

•anxiety

•empathy

•extraversion - the extent to which a person has a deep-seated need to receive ego enhancement, self-esteem, and a sense of wholeness *from other people* as opposed to receiving that affirmation within oneself;

• introversion - is the extent to which a person derives a sense of wholeness and fulfillment apart from a reflection of this self from other people.

These five principles refer to developing the acquisition and may be expanded. David Nunan offers another description of teaching principles concerning vocabulary. He proposes them to avoid the difficulties in planning the vocabulary component of a course. These guiding principles can be applied in a variety of teaching and learning situations.

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